

The Batsford  
Color Book  
of LONDON

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# The Batsford Colour Book of LONDON

Introduction by JOHN PUDNEY

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# The Plates

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# *Introduction*

## *The Well-Ordered Lack of Pattern*

Basically, most of London is a series of settlements, communities, parishes and villages. To the proper cockney the sense of locality is very real, almost tribal. I knew a Thames waterman called George. His job (for which he had served the long and exacting apprenticeship required in our times as in the Middle Ages) lay on the London tideway, and his home was in the riverside London borough of Hammersmith. He could be genial over his beer ashore. Afloat he could command a range of abuse and barbed backchat which placed him high in the respect of all men and he was the terror of such amateurs as myself who might get across his bows, or commit some other misdemeanor of Thamesmanship.

At Hammersmith, George was a proud family man with grown-up daughters, a Londoner born and bred, who had rarely set foot outside the metropolis and had never sailed beyond the Thames Estuary.

I had never seen him in a state of melancholy until our encounter on the river wall about half way between his home and his favourite pub. After characteristically terse greetings, I learnt that he didn't fancy going home, yet hadn't the heart to take a drink. With this, gloom enveloped us like a London fog.

'What's hit you, George?'

'It's me daughter Eva.' He spoke as if that lively creature, the apple of his eye, and an eye-full for most of us, were dead. I made sympathetic noises, hoping he would be more specific: but he

spat over the wall and said nothing. Not wishing to intrude on private grief, I managed to screw myself up to say.

'Sorry, George. What's happened?'

'It's what's going to happen.'

At least Eva was not dead! I waited. Something portentous was coming. George spat expertly on to some flotsam going out on the ebb tide. 'She's getting married.'

'Congratulations', I said of course, out of politeness. 'Who to?'

'She's marrying foreign,' he said in a voice of doom.

London is a cosmopolitan city. Such a girl could find a Tahitan, or even an Eskimo. On the tideway George himself encountered, and drank with, seamen of all nationalities. I had never heard him express violently nationalistic feelings.

'What sort of foreign, George?'

Sombrely and with contempt he said: 'She's marrying across the tramlines.'

Now in those days, trams ran along the street which divided Hammersmith from Shepherds Bush. The two districts looked, and still look, alike—just a chunk of Western London. But in the eyes of George the old tramlines represented a visible frontier, with another tribe beyond it.

An old-fashioned concept? No: it lives on in the minds of the teenagers of the 'sixties. A youth called Ted who helps me with the car had a lurid black eye. It was inflicted by The Islington Mob, he told me. It would be revenged by The Kentish Town Gang to which he belongs. This youthful warfare is raged between communities about six blocks apart with an invisible municipal boundary dividing their loyalties.

Such unseen frontiers have done much to give London its astonishing variety and to have caused it to grow without achieving any recognisable pattern, into the second largest city in the world (Tokyo,

rather surprisingly being the largest). Compared with New York or Paris, the British capital is a nightmare of complexity and this I claim to be one of its foremost charms. At any moment you may step from one century to another. Taking a walk, like Samuel Johnson, down Fleet Street with its soaring newspaper buildings, you may diverge a dozen paces into Wine Office Court to your left and step into the Cheshire Cheese, a tavern where Johnson had his accustomed place, now, as in his day, with sawdust upon its floor and liberal helpings of steak and kidney pudding on the tables. And changed not at all from the place that George Augustus Sala described in the last century, 'a little lopsided wedged-up house that always reminds you structurally of a high-shouldered man with his hands in his pockets . . . full of holes and corners and cupboards and sharp turnings'.

Or you might steal a few minutes off from Lloyds or the Stock Exchange and enter the precincts of the Tower of London built by William The Conqueror, with its ravens and its Yeomen Warders—those over-publicised Beefeaters who nevertheless give you a shock of surprise when you find they really do exist as flesh and blood.

There are many subtle roots and traditions which go to form the well-ordered lack of pattern in London. The walled City was in fact separate from the royal and religious centre of Westminster. Soho was a hunting demesne, Chelsea a village. As these over-spilled and merged, many of the work patterns of the Middle Ages remained. Trades, crafts and professions were grouped together. The City is as ever the money centre. London's and Britain's greatest meat market adjoins it in Smithfield. From meat you can step across an unseen boundary into a concentration of diamonds and precious stones in Hatton Garden and Charterhouse Street where in one building 75% of the world's rough-cut diamonds are marketed. Britain's legal.

profession clings to its traditional quarters in The Temple, Lincoln's Inn and Gray's Inn.

Such unorganised but convenient groupings owe little or nothing to modern or even classical conceptions of town planning. After the Great Fire of 1666, Sir Christopher Wren attempted to straighten things out, but his achievements are unrelated masterpieces, St. Paul's Cathedral and his magnificent City churches. Such a hand as that of Napoleon which ordered Paris never fell upon the sprawl of London—described by Cobbett already in the eighteenth century as the 'Great Wen'. There was no wholesale destruction of London between the Great Fire in the seventeenth century and Hitler's bombardment in the twentieth. The prodigious development of the metropolis has been piecemeal, though in the post-war years there has been much control and widespread, though not comprehensive, planning.

In spite of so much inherent traditionalism London is sensitive to the altering conditions of social and commercial life and, even in its very centre, is never static. Mayfair, for instance, which is bounded by Regent Street, Piccadilly, Hyde Park and Oxford Street, was the most fashionable residential quarter in Britain, in my youth. Dukes, butlers and aproned maids abounded. The owners—the Duke of Westminster the largest of them—positively prohibited commerce. Trade plates were banned from the stately porticoes of the great houses. Their conversion to shops was unthinkable. The Prime Minister's private house was in Brook Street. Queen Elizabeth II was born in Bruton Street. Every hero of every smart novel gave Mayfair as his address.

Then came two pressures. The social one was retrenchment. Following the First World War the noble and the wealthy could not afford to keep up the great houses, and servants began to vanish. There was a move south-west toward Belgravia and Chelsea, and

west toward Kensington. The commercial pressure came from the east and it always seemed to me that its dainty spearhead was woman's fashion. It was obviously smart to set up shop, discreetly of course, in smartest Mayfair. Norman Hartnell, the royal dress-maker opened his establishment in Bruton Street, a few doors from the birthplace of the Queen. Within a couple of decades Mayfair became swamped with commerce, with a fringe of great hotels replacing the private mansions of Park Lane and such smart social life as remained confined to luxury apartments. Until he came to the throne, King George VI, as Duke of York, had lived in Piccadilly on the extreme edge of Mayfair. Characteristic of the changing times, the royal home later became one of the centres of the British film industry.

While the doctors and specialists cling to Harley Street—not without difficulty—and the top tailors to Savile Row, some trades and professions become migratory. Book-publishers for example once proliferated in the shadows of St. Paul's Cathedral or the British Museum. Bombing drove them away from St. Paul's. The expansion of the British Museum and London university tends to squeeze them out of that area. So the migration is to the west, into Mayfair and the surrounding districts where some, not least the publishers of this book, have settled for noble eighteenth-century homes.

So the well-ordered lack of pattern of London, with its invisible social and commercial frontiers, presents a shape which is unlike that of any other city. This can daunt a visitor accustomed to numbered avenues or logical outlays: it can be a plague to countrymen. Yet it contains elements of surprise, or unconventionality, of variety, which exceed in their pleasure those of any other city I know.

## *A Blood Relationship With Nature*

Greater London, which covers an area of some 722 square miles, has a population of over eight millions. Many of these are not born Londoners: a good number are not even English by birth. The streets of London, traditionally 'paved with gold', have always acted as a magnet to people from all over the British Isles seeking a living—or a fortune. Not only from the British Isles but for many centuries from Europe and in the post-war years from Commonwealth countries. In my lifetime insularity has perished in Britain: and a Londoner may well encounter half a dozen nationalities in the course of an ordinary humdrum day—without turning a hair. An Irish milkman on the doorstep, a West Indian bus conductor, coffee served by an Italian café-proprietor, lunch ordered from a Cypriot waiter, a haircut by an Eastern European refugee, an evening newspaper bought from a Scotsman. All such as these acquire a common identity: they may not be English but they are Londoners.

London is a ready adopter of talent. Not least among its adopted sons was Shakespeare who came from Stratford to spend most of his working life and to find the only stage for his talents. The great Dr. Johnson himself, the very personification of the London of his period, was not a native but a Lichfield lad. Charles Dickens, so fully identified with London in the minds of most of us, was born at Portsea. In our own times the writer who has written the most evocative poetry about London, at the same time establishing himself as a prominent London publisher is T. S. Eliot, born a citizen of the United States.

Apart from the arts the theme of London as a city of adoption could be pursued endlessly through the spheres of commerce, the professions and public life. In passing it may be noted that the more prominent Prime Ministers are Londoners by adoption—Macmillan (Scots), Churchill (Anglo-American born Blenheim), Chamberlain (Birmingham), Baldwin (Worcester), Macdonald (Scots), Lloyd-George (Welsh).

Because cosmopolitanism is a London quality, it does not mean that natives are hard to find. On the contrary the true Londoner born and bred is there in massive force and very much in control of an intensely individualistic way of life, whether he be manual or white-collar worker. Yet I have often noticed how the family pedigree of even the most blue-blooded Cockney retains some tenuous connection with the soil. There may be a granny, an aunt, or cousins somewhere out in the country. Only births, marriages or death may occasion a visit either way. The clan link, however, is cherished: and in the townsfolk there is that modicum of country blood and at least one green finger in every pair of hands which is expressed in a million and one flowering window-boxes, back gardens, and vegetable allotments. Throughout the confines of inner London, as well as in the more spacious suburbs, you are never far from a shop selling seedlings, plants and packets of seed.

Perhaps because of this inherent, sometime unconscious blood relationship with Nature, Londoners over the years have acquired the parks and open spaces they deserve. Walk in the early morning away from the traffic through Hyde Park into Kensington Gardens and you might be in the green heart of England. This was brought home to me when I first came to work in London and was young and bold enough to join the early morning swimmers in the Serpentine. The trot there and back from my gloomy urban attic gave me the sweet and freshening illusion that I had begun the day in the

countryside from which I came and for which part of me still hankered in spite of the near-ecstasy of living in London.

Incidentally the Serpentine all-the-year-rounders, (who broke the ice in the winter by which time my own enthusiasm was spent) offered me an early off-beat cross-section of London life. Their company, all on first-name terms, included a butler from Kensington, a famous lawyer, a grocer and an elderly peer from Belgravia, a trainer of opera singers, a lift-attendant from Bayswater and a builder from Soho. From this last character I learned one of the secrets of ice-breaker survival. My job as an apprentice surveyor caused me to pay him a professional visit at his office one December morning about ten o'clock. I found the robust heroic figure of the Serpentine sitting by a powerful stove swaddled in rugs taking very hot tea with a dash of rum in it. 'Got to thaw out, boy', he explained. 'So as soon as I've sent out me men to their jobs, I kind of take it easy for a bit. Whatever made you give up? Not afraid of a drop of cold water, I hope?' With that he sneezed heavily, ordered me to shut the door because of the draught, then in the stupefying fug we got down to business.

That first London job of mine pitched me among the ripest of Cockneys. Though my father's farm was less than twenty miles from Piccadilly Circus 'going to town' was a rare experience and I don't suppose I had ever spoken to a true Cockney until I arrived at the bottom of the ladder and Alf Bush was told to keep an eye on me.

Alf imparted some basic education. 'Just git up them apples and fill the inks in the front office . . .' Such was my introduction to the private language of 'working-class' London. Apples? Apples and pears—stairs, an elementary example of the famous Cockney rhyming slang, then quite unknown to me. Alf soon told me that it was not considered professional to go out without a *titfer* and probably he relished my puzzled inability to translate this as tit for tat—hat.

Before long I became all too familiar with the two crosses he had to bear. The first was his 'trouble' which for a long time I took to mean some internal complaint, but which of course was his trouble and strife—wife. The second was his 'plates' which turned out to be not his dentures but his plates of meat—feet. It would be misleading to suggest that a visitor or even a resident in London is likely to hear this witty and fanciful language in daily use, though even a brief sojourn in one of the markets or docks might well yield some gems. Probably it is on the decline though there are undoubtedly enough devotees to prevent it from dying out altogether.

It is possible also to be a visitor or a resident within the centre of London without becoming aware of the Thames, though this is not recommended. London is there because of the Thames. The invading Romans immediately sized up the value of the site in the terms of strategy and facilities. They consolidated *Londinium* as the first point in the great estuary of the *Tamesis* where a crossing could be made, linked with a good port. There, over the existing native settlements they created a fortress, a supply base, a centre of government covering some 350 acres on the north bank of the river. Of this we are frequently reminded when remains of their shipping are dredged up from the river bed and when this century's rebuilding of the city uncovers their masonry and tiling. In Lower Thames Street beneath The Coal Exchange (of all unlikely places) there are well-preserved remains of *Roman baths*. For about three and a half centuries London was a Roman city.

You can walk out of Trafalgar Square and down the Strand today without catching so much as a glimpse of the Thames until you reach Waterloo Bridge. Yet the Strand, as its name implies, was a riverside highway linking the City of London with the Abbey and Palace of Westminster. It is at Westminster itself and at the Tower of London that something of the significance of the river can be

judged. The Benedictine monks built Westminster (begun 1050) because of the river—and took excellent fish from it. The first Norman invaders built the Tower to overawe the populace of the City and to provide a fortress with river access, dominating the deep water harbour which is the Pool of London. Below and above these points the waters of the Thames form a thoroughfare of incomparable importance to London's history, linking Oxford, Windsor Castle, the palaces of Hampton Court, Richmond, Fulham and Lambeth upstream, and downstream Greenwich and Tilbury where Queen Elizabeth I reviewed her forces before they embarked to fight the Armada.

Throughout London the Thames is tidal, with a rise and fall of about fourteen feet. From the Pool downstream the tideway serves the Port of London which covers an area of some 4,000 acres of which 666 acres are water.

Though the Thames has created and shaped the metropolis, it is curious that London, during the last century or so, has almost turned its back on the river. On the north shore an Embankment thoroughfare, built about a century ago, runs from Chelsea to Blackfriars: thence there is, lamentably, no continued direct access to the tideway for pedestrian or vehicle. The south bank is much worse served. But for a brief stretch of open embankment at Lambeth and a handsome but all too short walk outside the Festival Hall, the shore is closed to wayfarers. There are excursion steamers on the river itself and these provide quite the most rewarding views of the essential historic London: but the river has ceased to be a routine thoroughfare or a pleasure resort for Londoners, as it was from the Middle Ages until the early part of the nineteenth century. In Elizabethan times at least the water was still sweet and clear and it was at a point somewhere near Waterloo Bridge that Edmund Spenser lovingly wrote: *Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my Song . . .*

Even if London, compared to cities such as Paris which makes such a feature of the Seine, chooses nowadays to regard her river merely as an industrial highway full of singularly unappetising water, you can still, if you are wise, seek out the beauty of light and the grace of movement of a stream which more than any other has contributed to English history. And at night in London sometimes there comes a breath of sea air blowing in along the tideway from forty miles away where the Thames meets the sea. And often in the small hours you may hear the sirens of sea-going ships on the move—and suddenly recollect that you can take a very inexpensive Underground ticket to London Bridge or the Tower, step aboard a vessel in the Pool and sail off to the Baltic and Soviet Russia.

### *London Wears Grey Well*

During my lifetime London leisure, pleasure and social life have changed for the better. There is more of all of it for everyone.

A generation or so ago there was the rigid pattern of The Season. From early spring through to July, everyone who 'was anyone' was in and about town. In August the great houses were shuttered, and it just 'wasn't done' to be seen in Mayfair. There were even impoverished adherents to this snobbery who, not being able to make the grouse moors, lived on incognito behind drawn blinds. This of course was an exercise limited to people with social pretensions, a small proportion of the vast population of London. Nevertheless the pattern was imposed upon public entertainment. It was unthinkable to open a new play or an art exhibition, or to run opera, ballet or concerts in the off season.

Though a pale shadow of The Season still lingers among people who are silly enough and rich enough to 'bring out' their daughters as debutantes the rigid pattern has gone. Throughout the year new plays, films, operas, ballets, art exhibitions open in London. Restaurants and eating places which have improved out of all knowledge during the 'fifties and the 'sixties have no slack periods. In the summer months when Londoners pour out for their holidays, thousands of tourists arrive—bringing their raincoats with them.

I will concede that they are indeed wise to come equipped. Yet by and large—and except for fog—I defend the climate of London. I have had the good fortune to know many cities on all the continents of the world. My ill fortune has been that it always rains when I am in them. Thus I am in a position at least to make comparisons. The cruellest hardest rain lashes down between the windowed cliffs of New York; the silliest, most fitful rain tormented me in Cairo; the wettest is in mid-summer in Rome, the coldest in Stockholm during the spring thaw. The most expected, most fitting, most refreshing, most varied, rain falls in London.

London wears grey well. It shines and twinkles in the rain. Throughout history these showers and storms have suddenly swept over London, tempering, weathering the place to the vagaries of a soft climate enlivened by proximity to the sea. I have the feeling that rain in London, however frustrating and discomforting, has a clean quality about it in this century. Rain in the so-called good old days must have been much less agreeable. The atmosphere was more sulphurous and sooty with every single building belching smoke throughout the year. Up to the turn of this century mud gathered in the streets. Notice as you walk round inner London, the foot-scrapers built-in to the entrances of all the older buildings. Even in late Victorian times self-appointed sweepers stood at road crossings to wield their brooms in front of the gentry clearing a passage through

mod and dung. Yes, dung there was in plenty when the huge metropolis was mostly horse-drawn at the beginning of this century.

There was so little cover, too, from the rain, before the underground railways were built, buses covered their tops and umbrellas became cheap and plentiful. Sentimentalists still cherish the memory of open-top double-decker buses. For sight-seeing in fine weather these are unequalled (I rode on one recently in New York) but I still shiver at the recollection of the London bus conductors cry of 'On top only!' on wet mornings and evenings on the way to and from work. Standing still in rain can be tolerable. To be sitting exposed on the roof of a moving bus turned one into an enemy of mankind not only for the duration, but for some time afterwards.

Winter sunlight, high summer, and autumn mist dress London wonderfully. Under snow the metropolis looks magnificent even though the streets so quickly turn to slush. Fogs are less frequent than they were in the good old days and they could be said to have some romantic glamour as reflected in the pages of Dickens and Edgar Wallace. But the total, lethal fog which sometimes descends in these days is best avoided, even by those who claim to know London like the back of their hand. This boast I once foolishly made myself as I set off to drive out of a pea-souper into the country. Nobody could tell whether it was day or night as I followed the guide flares round Trafalgar Square. It was in fact night and for me there was the promise of waking in fresh air in Sussex. I managed to cross Westminster Bridge with a passing thought for the Wordsworth's sonnet:

*This City now doth like a garment wear  
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,  
Ships, towers, domes, theatres and temples lie  
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;  
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air . . .*

Then in the ancient borough of Lambeth, somewhere behind the Archbishop of Canterbury's London Palace, my foolhardiness met its match. No matter which way I turned the nose of the car fetched up against the railings with which the Victorians protected their terraced houses. Knowing the district so well, as I thought, I would make for North Lambeth Underground Station on foot, abandoning the car which in any case was lodged in a blind street. When day came I would continue the journey. The station was found after much groping, and in a few minutes I was back at Piccadilly Circus, snug and warm in an all-night café.

With daylight turning the black fog slightly ochre I returned to Lambeth rather jauntily. I had no idea of the name of that blind street, to be sure, yet I thought I could retrace my steps easily enough.

Basing myself on the station, I spent that whole day and the next groping in the fog without finding my car. On the third day, when the fog lifted, it was discovered for me by the police, in a builder's yard.

Yes, the best places in a London fog are in bed or in a Turkish bath, though somehow most of London's multitudes manage to crawl about. Enough at least for T. S. Eliot to have written:

*Unreal City,  
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,  
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many  
I had not thought death had undone so many.*

## *Not Style, But Pride*

The pictures which follow portray varied and justly famous aspects of a great city and a national way of life. They have little in common. They do not match or fit as components to a single coherent design. All that they have in common is that they belong to London and to British history. There is no such thing as a London Style. There is no specific uniformity in the buildings and public places which stamps them like the red buses with a London trademark.

Perhaps the three most universally revered features of London are the Houses of Parliament at Westminster, St. Paul's Cathedral and Buckingham Palace. Of these, only St. Paul's is an architectural masterpiece. It now stands in splendid pride, as unrelated to the modern buildings which almost overshadow it, as it used to be in disdainful contrast to the nineteenth-century buildings which formerly hemmed it in. Controversy rages about the construction of tall, modern buildings in the immediate vicinity of St. Paul's, which Wren designed to stand to the glory of God above all the other buildings in the City. In this, I must confess to being a heretic. I believe that St. Paul's will remain as proud and as impressive even if it is hedged about by skyscrapers as is St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York. For St. Paul's is not merely a piece of architecture: it is a symbol. It is an expression of London's pride, built to the glory of God.

The symbolism of royalty enhances Buckingham Palace. It is not, by any means, an architectural gem: and has in fact been the London home of royalty only since Queen Victoria came to the throne in 1837. It was built for the Dukes of Buckingham and purchased off them by King George III. One can think of a hundred

other eighteenth century mansions in the British Isles which are more comely and which possess a longer and more varied history. But Buckingham Palace, in its superb situation, now touches the heart of all mankind and is the very epitome of London pride.

A good century away in architectural style are the Gothic Houses of Parliament built between the 'forties and the 'sixties of the last century. Crowning this flamboyant Victorian masterpiece is the Clock Tower which is an emotional impact. This was immensely intensified during the Second World War when the whole civilised world regarded the great bell as the very symbol of freedom and democracy.

No three buildings, constructed in different centuries, could look less alike or serve more varied purposes. Yet taken together, they provide an image which is London. A London which is durable in spite of constant change, which is informal in spite of its magnificent ceremonial, which is warm-natured in spite of its weather.

# The Plates

## *King's Reach*

Each section or reach of the Thames tideway is known by name. This stretch of water between Westminster and London Bridge was named in honour of the 25th anniversary of the accession of King George V.

A view downstream of *Discovery* and other ships which enjoy permanent moorings against the Embankment just above Blackfriars Bridge, which is in the background and to the right of the picture.

Lying downstream behind *Discovery* is H.M.S. *President*, a training ship which from time to time flies an Admiral's flag. H.M.S. *President* happens to be the nearest of Her Majesty's ships to The Admiralty in Whitehall. Every Admiral, therefore, appointed to The Admiralty for any special assignment, is 'resident' officially in H.M.S. *President* from which his flag is flown.

On the other side of the Embankment is the foliage of The Temple Gardens which mark the boundary between The City and Westminster, with trim lawns which run down toward the river from the ancient buildings of the Inner and Outer Temple which are the heart of British law. St. Paul's Cathedral rises majestically behind.

Noel Habgood F.R.P.S.



## *The Tower of London*

In the foreground, the moat excavated by King Richard I at the end of the twelfth century and now a pleasant lawn upon which The Yeomen of the Guard is sometimes performed on summer evenings.

The Thames with Tower Bridge open for shipping to pass through, is in the middle distance and beyond lie the hills of South London.

The Tower itself consists of a fascinating mass of fortifications and domestic buildings put up, added to, and altered from the time of William The Conqueror to the middle of the last century.

William built the Tower just outside the City of London boundaries to impress the English with his might and power and to secure the Port of London. Since the eleventh century, this forbidding, fortified structure has been a citadel, a royal palace, a state prison, a mint and an armoury and a treasury—always garrisoned by the troops of the crown. The last monarch to reside there was King Charles II, for one night on the eve of his coronation. Though English monarchs have used it little as a residence, the list of royal, noble and eminent men and women who have died within its walls is formidable. They include King Bruce of Scotland and King John of France in the fourteenth century; King Henry VI of England in the fifteenth century; Queen Anne Boleyn and Queen Catherine Howard in the sixteenth century; with a long list of Archbishops, Dukes and men of eminence.

Not London's happiest spot, but one which crams in more history per square foot, than any other except the Abbey itself.

*Colour Library International Ltd.*



## *Tower Bridge*

Viewed upstream with the Tower on the extreme right and the tide a bit slack, showing a stretch of muddy sand which very small Londoners treat as a lido.

Tower Bridge (1886-94) is one of the great Victorian engineering feats, clothed in fantastical Gothic Baronial costume. Beneath the fanciful masonry are twin steel towers 200 feet high. The seventy yards of the middle span is divided into two parts each weighing 1,000 tons. These spans can be raised by hydraulic machinery in about one minute to enable shipping to pass beneath the bridge. There is heavy vehicular traffic across the bridge.

In recent times, a London bus was taken unawares as the bridge was about to be raised. The driver skilfully leapt the few feet of the gap.

This, however, is almost the only mishap recorded since the finish of the building of the bridge in 1894. There are ample signals both for road traffic and for shipping when the drawbridge is to be raised.

This is the last bridge between London and the sea. At points downstream the river is crossed only by means of tunnels and ferries.

There is a family connection with the Victorian Gothic of the Houses of Parliament. The co-designer of Tower Bridge was Sir John Wolfe-Barry, son of Sir Charles Barry, architect of Gothic Westminster.

*Colour Library International Ltd.*



## St. Paul's Cathedral

Designed and inspired by Sir Christopher Wren. The building begun in 1675 and finished in 1710. Wren himself, that great artist and architect, lies there beneath an inscription which reads *Si monumentum requiris, circumspice*, a most fitting phrase which can be translated as 'If you seek a monument, look around you . . .'

This great Cathedral, owing something in its conception to St. Peter's in Rome, is notable for having been built as a Protestant place of worship. It stands on a site occupied by several predecessors, two churches built in the seventh century, and a third in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, which was burnt in the Great Fire of 1666.

This western front of St. Paul's seen in the picture, is a scene of much ceremonial, for the Cathedral is the foremost church of The City of London and the seat of the Bishops of London. Westminster Abbey is the traditional church of royalty. St. Paul's traditionally represents the citizens of London.

In the Second World War the immediate surroundings were devastated by bombardment but the great church itself miraculously escaped, except for superficial damage. The reconstruction of the area with commercial buildings which are towering above the 366 feet high cross above the dome of St. Paul's, has caused misgivings. It is doubtful, however, whether surrounding building enterprises will ever detract from the beauty and dignity of Wren's masterpiece.

A. F. Kersting F.R.P.S.



## *The City Rebuilding*

Roman foundations to a wall of the Middle Ages. Beyond, new office blocks rise toward the skies over London.

For nearly nine centuries the City of London withstood the attacks of all enemies. There were ravages by fire and pestilence. These and the persistent craving of the citizens to develop and improve constantly altered the face of the City. Then in the nineteen-forties came the German bombardment, leaving but the names of famous streets, lanes and alleys. These names have gone up again, worn proudly to identify a new generation of buildings.

If these, at first sight, appear to be functional and lacking in specific London character, it must be borne in mind that they belong to our times and serve the needs of a progressive commercial society. Probably they will take on something of the character of London. A future generation perhaps, will clamour to preserve them as specimens of mid-twentieth century architecture. Perhaps

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*A. C. K. Ware (Photos) Ltd.*



## *St. Clement Danes*

On an island at the eastern end of the Strand where it approaches the City boundary. St. Clement is the patron saint of Danish seafarers and the original church on this site, so close to the Thames, indicates that there was a Danish settlement nearby. The present structure was designed by Wren. The spire was added by James Gibbs in 1719 and there hang the famous bells of the nursery rhyme—‘Oranges and lemons, say the bells of St. Clements’.

An eminent worshipper at this church was Dr. Samuel Johnson who is commemorated by a window, by a curiously inadequate statue, and also by an annual service on December 13.

The church suffered great damage during the Second World War. A felicitous aspect of its reconstruction is that it has been adopted by the Royal Air Force as its own church in London. Danish residents in London also regard it as a special place of worship and distribute oranges and lemons, every year, in the church.

*Picture Point Ltd.*



## *Discovery*

The ship specially built for the Antarctic expedition of 1901-4 commanded by Captain R.F. Scott. This sturdy, historic vessel remains permanently moored in a place of honour alongside the Embankment between Blackfriars and Waterloo Bridge which is seen in the middle distance.

*Discovery*, with the white Ensign flying proudly at her stern, survived the ice of Antarctica to become one of the sights of London. Though she is open to public view in the afternoons, she is not just a museum piece. She still has an active life as a training ship for sea scouts.

Waterloo Bridge, designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, is London's most recently constructed bridge to span the river. It was officially opened in 1945. Controversy raged about the demolition of the previous bridge built by Sir John Rennie in 1811, sometimes called 'The noblest bridge in the world', but Waterloo Bridge is now considered by many to be a worthy successor.

In the distant background is a view of Westminster with the flag flying from the Victoria Tower, indicating that Parliament is sitting.

*Picture Point Ltd*



## *The Royal Festival Hall*

One of the world's most modern and accoustically satisfactory concert halls. It is situated on the hitherto neglected South Bank of the river and was designed as the one permanent building of the Festival of Britain 1951.

After the Second World War in which Queens Hall was destroyed by bombardment, London sorely needed a concert hall. The London County Council provided this new amenity with seating for 3,000 people, just ten years after the bombing.

Alongside it stood until recently a landmark of old industrial London, the Shot Tower, built in 1789 and by common consent preserved when the South Bank was reconstructed, but since unhappily demolished. The height of the Tower was about the same as that of the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral. It was used industrially for shaping hot lead into shot. The lead was dropped from the top through a colander into cold water at the bottom of the Tower, taking the shape of bullets in the process. Ten tons of shot were made in a single working day.

*Picture Point Ltd.*



## *London's River*

Looking west along the Thames Embankment. In the foreground Charing Cross railway bridge, finished 1866, unlovely by day, wears evening dress, with southbound trains pulling out toward the coast, to such historic destinations as Tunbridge Wells, Battle, Hastings and Dover.

Where the embankment ends beneath the face of Big Ben, the river is spanned by Westminster Bridge. This is not the actual structure which accommodated William Wordsworth with inspiration for his famous sonnet: it was built after his time, finished in 1862.

Beyond is Lambeth Bridge connecting Westminster with Lambeth Palace, the London residence of the Archbishops of Canterbury. Tonight, like the Houses of Parliament across the river, it is unlit. The Archbishop and the Parliamentarians are out of town. But the new London of the 'sixties is still very much awake, Vickers building climbing the skyline behind the Palace of Westminster. And on the right of the Embankment, ever alert, are the lighted windows of Scotland Yard.

*Picture Point Ltd.*



## *The Houses of Parliament*

The Archbishop of Canterbury's view across the river from Lambeth. Scotland Yard on the right behind Westminster Bridge. In front of the buildings is the famous terrace upon which members of the House of Commons and the House of Lords entertain their guests with a view of the river.

The Houses of Parliament are revered not so much for their antiquity as for the tradition of democratic government which they represent. Built in the middle of the last century they stand upon a site which is historic. The eight acres of this Gothic building covers the ground once covered by the Palace of Westminster, occupied by Edward The Confessor in the middle of the eleventh century and handed down to his successors on the English throne. King Henry VIII transferred the royal residence to Whitehall and the palace has not been occupied by any succeeding monarch.

More important to the tradition of democracy is that the House of Commons has met on this spot since 1547. In 1834 the House was burnt down. Its successor begun by Sir Charles Barry in 1840, was completed in the 1860's.

From the Victoria Tower on the left of the picture, a Union Jack flies by day when the House is sitting.

The pressure of business is such that these buildings, bombed and re-constructed during the Second World War, no longer cope with the pressure of parliamentary business and an extension is to be made on the other side of Westminster Bridge, to the right of Big Ben.

*Picture Point Ltd.*



## *Big Ben*

Named after Sir Benjamin Hall, an otherwise forgotten First Commissioner of Works who was in office at the time of its erection. The hour bell was cast in Whitechapel in 1858. This is the most familiar bell in the world.

It was first broadcast by the B.B.C. on December 31, 1923. Since then, with very few lapses, it has been the voice of London, speaking not only for Londoners but for the people of Britain and the Commonwealth, and for all the free democracies in the world.

There is a microphone in the turret of Big Ben which relays the chimes and the striking note direct to the control room at Broadcasting House. These direct broadcasts have been very rarely interrupted. Big Ben was stopped for overhaul twice in the 'thirties and once in 1956 when Great Tom took its place. Twice the clock stopped in 1957, once because of a pot of paint and once because of a loose wire. The only occasion on which direct broadcasting was substituted by a recording was during the period of Hitler's V-weapon attacks on London toward the end of the Second World War.

The statue in the foreground is of Queen Boadicea who headed a revolt of the British against the Romans and succeeded in destroying Londinium before being defeated in the field and taking poison. The memory of this fierce and valiant lady who died A.D. 62, was somewhat belatedly, though dramatically, cast as a monument in A.D. 1902.

*Noel Habgood F.R.P.S.*



## *Westminster Abbey*

Viewed from Dean's Yard, with some of the buildings of Westminster School in the foreground. Here is the coronation church of English kings and the memorial place of celebrated people. Edward the Confessor built the Abbey upon a Thames swamp called The Isle of Brambles. He consecrated the church and within a few days was buried there, within sight of the throne on which British monarchs have been crowned for some 600 years.

As we see it in this picture, it stands as one of the finest examples of Early English architecture to the extension of which English monarchs have contributed for many hundreds of years. In 1561, Queen Elizabeth I, who is buried there, conveyed the Abbey to the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, under whose jurisdiction it still remains.

Nowhere in the world is there a church having such eminent connections with a nation's life. There are greater and more majestic places of worship in Great Britain, but none with such an atmosphere of living history.

*A. F. Kersting F.R.P.S.*



## *Westminster Abbey—The Nave*

In the foreground, one of the most imaginative and moving memorials of all time—the tomb of The Unknown Warrior.

Buried in the Abbey are some seventy royalties. With these are commemorated famous men in all walks of life belonging to all periods of history. There are Prime Ministers such as Bonar Law and Neville Chamberlain, Field Marshals such as Plumer and Allenby, men of note such as Sir Isaac Newton, John and Charles Wesley and Lord Baden-Powell. The Poets' Corner is full of distinction, commemorating among others (not all poets) Thackeray, Handel, Ruskin, Goldsmith, Burns, Wordsworth, Adam Lindsay Gordon, Tennyson, Milton and Chaucer. Yet among all these eminent dead, The Unknown Warrior, the body of an unidentified soldier killed in the First World War, holds pride of place in the nave through which every British monarch passes to coronation.

*A. F. Kersting F.R.P.S.*



## *Hyde Park*

Whatever may emerge or erupt upon the skyline (and the building in the picture is the Hilton Hotel), the green leafy acres of Hyde Park remain one of the joys of London.

No other city in fact has in its midst an open space of such refreshing and extensive beauty. It covers just over 360 acres and to this may be added the 275 acres of Kensington Gardens which adjoins it. From Park Lane you can walk without the interruption of streets and buildings for nearly three miles.

Originally, the park was part of the hunting ground of King Henry VIII. It ran from St. James's as far north as Hampstead Heath. Its name derives from the fact that it belonged to the manor of Hyde, one of the possessions of the Benedictines of Westminster Abbey, until Henry VIII seized it.

The park was opened to the public in the reign of Charles I and at the time of the Restoration it was already a gay and fashionable resort. Not in this picture, but not very far away is the famous Speakers' Corner where orators of all political and religious convictions give free vent to their opinions, attended by crowds traditionally given to heckling and by policemen immune to the often outrageous sentiments expressed.

*Noel Habgood F.R.P.S.*



## *Buckingham Palace*

Ceremonial London. The band marches out from Buckingham Palace to pass down The Mall. Behind them and in front of the Palace is the Victoria Memorial, appropriately placed as Queen Victoria was the first monarch to make continuous use of Buckingham Palace as a royal residence.

In the reign of King James I there was a noble house here which was rebuilt by the Duke of Buckingham. King George III purchased it in 1761, and reconstruction was begun again. King George IV presided over this work but said in the end that he was too old to build a palace. A great deal of creative effort was put in by Nash; but when George IV died in 1830 the work was taken out of his hands and completed by Edward Blore. The Palace as we now see it, owes much to the work of Sir Aston Webb in 1913.

King Edward VIII wrote that he 'took up residence in that vast building without pleasure; the dank, musty smell I had always associated with the building assailed me afresh the instant I set foot inside the King's door.'

That mustiness has gone and the Palace remains a focal point in the life of London and of Britain. From the balcony, which can just be seen on the right, British monarchs have appeared on great occasions of national rejoicing. Few will forget the appearance there of King George VI with the Royal Family and Winston Churchill, at the end of the war in Europe in 1945.

*Picture Point Ltd.*



## *Trafalgar Square*

The Nelson Column, with the early Georgian church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields behind, facing the eastern end of The National Gallery. On the right is South Africa House.

The Nelson Column can hardly be described as a thing of beauty. It was designed by William Railton (1840-43) and is a copy of one of the Corinthian columns of the temple of Mars in Rome. The statue of Admiral Lord Nelson by E. H. Baily is 17 ft. 4½ in. high. The bronze lions at the foot of the column are the work of that hero of Victorian art, Sir Edwin Landseer, who was paid £3,000 for them.

What Trafalgar Square may lack in artistic quality is more than made up for by its sociability. People from all over the world foregather to enjoy the play of its fountains and to feed its innumerable pigeons. From time to time, people not only from London but from every corner of the British Isles, assemble round Landseer's lions for open-air meetings and political demonstrations. At Christmas time thousands gather here to sing carols. It must be said too, that from time to time Trafalgar Square has been something of a battlefield between the forces of the law and those of disorder.

Nevertheless, Sir Robert Peel, who, more than any other man, created London's police force, described Trafalgar Square as 'The finest site in Europe'.

*Picture Point Ltd.*



## *The National Gallery*

On the north side of Trafalgar Square. Considering the treasure it contains, it seems a modest enough building, erected in the eighteen-thirties and frequently enlarged.

When it possessed only about 150 indifferent paintings, John Ruskin mocked it as 'A European jest'. Toward the end of his life he took back that remark and spoke of it as being the most important collection of paintings in Europe. Today, with over 2,000 pictures of every school of painting, with some emphasis upon early Flemish and Dutch, it is certainly an aspect of London pride and of national pride too.

Admission to this wonderful collection is free, provided that sticks and umbrellas are left at the entrance. 'Officially no provision is made for the safekeeping of overcoats or hats', says Baedeker.

*Noel Habgood F.R.P.S.*



## Piccadilly Circus

Often described as 'The hub of the universe'. Certainly it is the most popular place of *rendez-vous* in London or indeed in Britain. At the centre presides Eros, a memorial to the Earl of Shaftesbury, one of the greatest of Victorian philanthropists. This lovely little figure, the first monument in London to be made in aluminium, is not particularly old. It was designed at the end of the last century by Sir Alfred Gilbert who received £3,000 for the complete memorial, which cost him twice as much. Gilbert was so incensed by his treatment at the hands of the Board of Works that he went to live abroad, expressing his wrath in a letter, of which this is an extract.

'There is more than £3,000 worth of copper in the memorial. Take it, melt it, turn it into pence, and give it to the unfortunate people who nightly find a resting-place on the Embankment, to the everlasting shame of the greatest metropolis in the world—and cease torturing an artist.'

Though the artist was tortured by niggardliness, his work lived on to delight the people of the twentieth century. On festive occasions they have to be restrained from climbing the pedestal to embrace Eros, who has been damaged by enthusiasts.

Piccadilly Circus as we see it here, not very lovely, but as G. K. Chesterton remarked, a lovely spectacle to those that cannot read. is now on the drawing boards for reconstruction.

*Colour Library International Ltd.*



## *Leicester Square*

William Shakespeare is appropriately commemorated in this open space in the heart of theatreland—but only by a statue which is a copy of the one in Westminster Abbey.

Leicester Square offers a welcome shady garden between Piccadilly Circus and Trafalgar Square. Architecturally hemmed in by cinemas, it lacks distinction and individual style. Formerly, it was known as Leicester Fields, a favourite spot for duelling. It found favour with men of eminence such as Joshua Reynolds, William Hogarth, Isaac Newton and John Hunter, the famous surgeon, all of whom lived hereabouts and who are commemorated by busts in the Square.

Among Londoners, there is the impression that they like to feel that it is there, though few would go out of their way to enjoy it as an amenity. For visitors, its charm is in its sudden discovery as a place of repose in the most hectic quarter of modern London.

*Picture Point Ltd.*



## Grosvenor Square

Grosvenor is the family name of the Dukes of Westminster who are the freeholders of much of this part of London. Since the Second World War, the Square has taken on a new and welcome character. It houses the Embassy of the United States of America and many other buildings connected with it, and thus has become the centre of American life in London. A cherished mark of this is the memorial to Franklin Delano Roosevelt, erected in 1948 as a gesture of respect for the President who died in 1945. Renowned words of inspiration expressed by Roosevelt, the four freedoms, are inscribed in the fountains which adjoin the statue—‘freedom from want’, ‘freedom from fear’, ‘freedom of speech’, and ‘freedom to worship’.

Grosvenor Square was formerly the most fashionable residential quarter of Mayfair. It was there that Dr. Johnson waited upon Lord Chesterfield, was driven from his door and afterwards immortalised the occasion in a letter.

‘Seven years, my lord, have passed since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door, during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of publication without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. . . . Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached the ground, encumbers him with help?’

*A. F. Kersting F.R.P.S.*



## *The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden*

A gala night with the Monarch in the royal box guarded by a Yeoman Warder in his Tudor ruff.

This splendid house has had its ups and downs since it was built in the eighteen-fifties. It has been used as a dance hall, and as such it was well known to the troops in the Second World War.

During the 'sixties it has been firmly re-established culturally as a home for international opera and ballet of the highest quality.

In its predecessor on the same site Garrick played and Handel produced his *Messiah*.

Architecturally, the Royal Opera House is not considered to be any sort of masterpiece but it has spaciousness and dignity worthy of the productions which in these days have added a special lustre to London life.

*Fox Photos Ltd.*



## *Hampton Court Palace*

Toward the upper limit of the Thames tideway is the Royal Palace of Hampton Court, no longer a royal residence but one of Britain's noblest Palaces. It enjoys a particularly fortunate mingling of styles, those of Tudor and Wren's Renaissance. It was first conceived and built by Cardinal Wolsey in mellow red brick on the site of a priory belonging to the Knights of St. John. Then its splendours caught the predatory eye of King Henry VIII and it fell, a demanded gift, into the hands of the king who enlarged it and built the Great Hall. One of the wonders made for Henry was an Astronomical Clock constructed in 1540 which indicates the hour, the month, the day of year, the phases of the moon, the time of high tide at London Bridge.

A century and a half after King Henry, Sir Christopher Wren completed the front of the Palace, seen here overlooking the Thames, on the orders of King William III. It was in the reign of that monarch that much of the gardens was laid out, including the famous maze.

*Noel Habgood F.R.P.S.*



## *Strand-on-the-Green*

One of London's innumerable 'villages'. It is not in fact on a green but enjoys a particularly fine aspect of the Thames in the western suburb of Chiswick, adjoining Kew.

An attractive waterfront with Georgian houses and cottages well preserved and cherished by their fortunate owners, with an agreeable riverside walk for the public. A walk without question enjoyed, when these buildings were new, by William Hogarth, who was buried in Chiswick churchyard a little way upstream. His house is still preserved in Hogarth Lane, on the arterial road which roars through Chiswick to London Airport and points west. With his mulberry tree it is dwarfed by the Hogarth Laundry and few air travellers give it a passing glance.

But at Strand-on-the Green the arterial road is invisible and inaudible—and just round the bend from this picture is one of London's most delectable tideway pubs, *The City Barge*, which is not least of the rewards for a visit to this out-of-the-way London waterfront.

*Noel Habgood F.R.P.S.*



## *The Cutty Sark at Greenwich*

Outside the last of the Thameside Royal Palaces, (King Henry VIII was born there) enthroned in a dry dock of her own, is the *Cutty Sark*, one of the famous tea clippers. Only a little more than a century ago, such swift sailing vessels raced home from the East with their precious cargo. High and dry as she is now, it is possible to explore the detail of her rigging and, below deck the skilful arrangements for the stowing of the tea chests she carried. A fitting resting place for a noble ship, as the National Maritime Museum is nearby.

Behind her can be seen a wing of The Royal Naval College which itself is part of Greenwich Palace. The full view of the Palace from the river is one of the noblest architectural sights in the British Isles. It owes much to King Charles II who initiated its reconstruction and the building of the Royal Observatory on the high ground behind. From the Observatory derived Greenwich Mean Time, the 'official' time not only of the British Isles but of Western Europe. The meridian of longitude is still reckoned from Greenwich.

*A. F. Kersting F.R.P.S.*







